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ABSTRACT

A junior team and a masters team of precision skaters in Canada were coached under two conditions. In one condition the coach used a monologue and the skaters were not permitted to ask questions or otherwise interact with the coach. In the other condition the coach interacted in a dialogue with team members. Both teams had significantly higher morale and were significantly more productive in the dialogue condition than in the monologue condition. Also, both teams behaved significantly more unproductively when the leader used a monologue than when she used a dialogue. A democratic style of coaching which engages members of a skating team in a dialogue is likely to be better for both morale and productivity than an autocratic style which directs the team by employing a monologue. (Two tables are included; 16 references are attached.) (Author/SG)

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Discourse and Leadership: Which is Best for Morale and Productivity a Monologue or a Dialogue?

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ABSTRACT

Discourse and Leadership: Which is Best for Morale and Productivity a Monologue or a Dialogue?

A Junior team and a Masters team of precision skaters were coached under two conditions. In one condition the coach used a monologue where the skaters were not permitted to ask questions or otherwise interact with the coach. In the other condition the coach interacted in a dialogue with the team members. Both teams had significantly higher morale and were significantly more productive in the dialogue condition than in the monologue condition. Also, both teams behaved significantly more unproductively when the leader used a monologue than when she used a dialogue. Implications of the results for theories of leadership and for the definition of autocratic and democratic leadership are discussed.

Discourse and Leadership: Which is Best for Morale and Productivity a Monologue or a Dialogue?

Perhaps the simplest and most important variation in discourse is the difference between a monologue and a dialogue. Whether leaders use a monologue or interact in a dialogue with the members of their groups can affect the members' morale and production. In the present study the effects of coaching students of precision skating teams using a monologue was compared to coaching them using a dialogue. The monologue was maintained by not permitting questions or comments from the students, contrasted to the dialogue where students were encouraged to initiate questions and comments.

From several points of view a dialogue is thought to be a better way of providing information than a noninteractive monologue. Linguists indicate that cohesion in discourse is a likely result of question/answer pairs (Schiffrin, 1987). The message that is more cohesive, we might suppose, has a greater chance of being received and understood. Also, sociolinguistic considerations suggest that interactive discourse helps to convey information, and the exchange of a question and an answer is the minimum unit of interaction (Sinclair, 1980); of course, exchanges in the form of questions and comments do not occur during a monologue. Educators recognize that "the classroom process is interactive discussion...(and that)...student questions come before teacher questions in the learning process"

(Dillon, 1988:7-8). They refer to classical teachers-philosophers, such as, Socrates and Aristotle, who emphasized the role of questions in the learning process. While the emphasis of pedagogical writers has been on the question-asking strategies of teachers and the learning process, the importance of students questions and the discourse constraints that are involved have also been a major concern. The notions just mentioned involve students in a classroom more than skaters on an ice rink, but they could also apply to the acquisition of a variety of athletic abilities and team skills.

During the Second World War Kurt Lewin found that a dialogue was more persuasive in having wives and mothers serve their families unrationed beef hearts, sweetbreads, and kidneys than a monologue (Bavelas, A., Festinger, L., Woodward, P., & Zander, A., cited in Wheeler, 1970). The monologue was a lecture given by a female nutritionist and the dialogue was lead by Alex Bavelas. Ladd Wheeler (1970) has pointed out that the difference between the monologue and dialogue may have been due to the charm of Alex Bavelas, who became famous not only as a social psychologist but also as a facilitator of small groups, rather than the greater persuasiveness of the dialogue. However, later studies (Lewin, 1947) showed the greater effectiveness of the dialogue over the monologue when both were carried out by the same person.

The effects of communication structure on determining

leaders, efficiency, and morale have been examined in a number of experimental studies (Shaw, 1964) with Bavelas (1950) originating the work. The findings with an information-gathering task demonstrated that the structures which permitted more participation in the communication process were less efficient but had higher morale than the more centralized communication structures which permitted less participation. The implication is that monologues compared to dialogues, gain efficiency at the expense of a loss in morale.

Leadership style is another consideration when examining the effects of one versus two-sided communications. The coaches who use a monologue can be described as using a more autocratic style in contrast to the democratic style of those who involve their team members in a dialogue.

The study of autocratic and democratic styles of leadership was another interest of Kurt Lewin (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). Groups of eleven-year-old boys were formed into clubs and presented with different leadership styles. An autocratic leader used mainly a monologue in his presentation to the boys, giving them orders and describing his decisions for the group. The democratic leader engaged the boys in a dialogue with discussions leading to group decisions. Morale was higher in the democratic group than in the autocratic group, and while the productivity of the autocratic group was higher than the democratic group when the leader was present, it was essentially nonexistent when the

leader was absent, whereas the democratic group was very productive when the leader was away.

It takes a lot of inference but one way of interpreting the work with the celebrated contingency model of leadership (Fiedler 1971, 1978; Peters, Hartke, & Pohlman, 1985) is that the task-oriented style is autocratic and likely to employ a monologue while the relationship or person-oriented style is democratic and likely to employ a dialogue. The results from studies of the model indicate that when conditions are either very favourable for the leader or very unfavourable, the task-oriented, autocratic, style was likely to be superior to the democratic style in achieving the productive goals of the group. When conditions were moderately favourable for the leader, the more person-oriented, democratic, style was best. It seems that the precision-skating teams used in the present study most likely fall in the moderately favourable range where it can be inferred that the democratic style would be preferred.

Another leadership theory having suggestions for different effects of a monologue compared to a dialogue is that of Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1982) who argue that the influence of a "telling" or monologue style versus a "participating" or dialogue style interacts with the maturity of the followers. Their suggestion is that the less mature members benefit more from a monologue than a dialogue but that the more mature members gain more from a dialogue. However, Danielson's (1976, cited in

Chelladurai & Carron, 1978) study of leadership in minor hockey found, relatively, the reverse. The participating dialogue was the best for beginners and the telling monologue was relatively better for the "elites" in his study than for the beginners. But it was found that the participating dialogue was, generally, positively related to team effectiveness.

House's (1971) path-goal theory of leadership suggests that a leader is supplemental rather than instrumental to the group members in achieving the goals of the group when the goals of the group have been established and are accepted by the members of the group. Leadership style is hypothesized to interact with the personal characteristics of the members as well as with the task or situation. The autocratic monologue is supposed to be the best for authoritarian personalities and the members with less ability. The democratic dialogue is best for nonauthoritarian personalities and the members with more ability. Also, tasks which require coordination among the members, such as, team sports, are more suited to the monologue where the decisions can be best made by the coach-leader. Implications from path-goal theory to coaching precision skating teams are that an interaction will occur between the monologue-dialogue styles and the ability of the members: the monologue being the best for the Junior skating teams and the dialogue being the best for the Master skating teams. This prediction is also consistent with Hersey and Blanchard's theory that leadership interacts with the

maturity of the followers.

Chelladurai and Carron (1978) identified four dimensions of the behaviour of leaders. In addition to autocratic and democratic dimensions they described training behaviour, which is aimed at improving skills and coordination of members activities, and social support, which is characterized by concern for the welfare of individual athletes. They predicted that there would be a difference in the preference for, among other things, different behaviours by those engaged in individual sports than those engaged in team sports. However, in a study of preferences among a sample of athletes they found that training behaviours were generally preferred. The only difference in the preference for autocratic versus democratic behaviours was that males preferred the autocratic to the democratic style and females preferred the opposite. The implication for the present study is that the democratic style would be preferred because the only participants were women.

It can be seen that the various theoretical approaches and empirical findings suggest that using a monologue or a dialogue in coaching female precision skating teams of different levels is likely to result in differences in productivity and satisfaction of the team members. However, it is not clear from the review exactly what might be found: Will one style be generally superior for both age levels, which one?, and/or will interactions occur with the levels of the teams? Then too, the

finding of no real differences is a possibility.

Method

Subjects

Thirty-three female members of a figure-skating club participated in the study. Fifteen were members of the club's Junior precision-skating team and were between the ages of 14 and 21 years. The other 18 were members of the Masters team and were between the ages of 21 and 47 years.

Procedure

The study took place on two regular-sized ice surfaces (200' x 90') and in a large banquet room (100' x 31').

The skaters were oriented to the study in a direct manner: They were told a week before the study that two coaching styles would be compared and that they would be experiencing each of them during two separate sessions made up of 4 hours and 20 minutes or six regular practice periods each (four of 50 minutes and two of 30 minutes each).

The first six practice periods were conducted using a monologue with both the Junior and Masters teams. Although this allowed any differences between the monologue and dialogue conditions to be attributed to order effects, it was unrealistic to have the monologue coaching style follow the dialogue. The coach who is also the first author of the study was convinced a monologue style following a dialogue style would completely lack credibility, and it would have been impossible, given her

coaching technique, for her to have one-sided communications follow two-sided.

At the beginning of every practice period using the monologue the skaters were told: "For this session you will not be allowed to ask questions or make comments. The only exception to this will be when you cannot hear my instructions in which case you may request that I repeat myself. Also, I will not be accepting any input you may have concerning what we are practising." The practices were conducted for all of the monologue periods using the same lesson structure which the skaters were familiar. (For instance, practices normally included a warm-up, drilling on what had been previously learned during past practices, the learning of new steps and formations as was required by the choreography of the team routine, and a warm-down.) Also, the coach tried not to change anything else, such as, the tone of her voice, facial expressions, the pace of the practices, or the workload goals of the practices. Whenever a skater mistakenly asked an inappropriate question, the coach replied, "I'm sorry but I won't answer that", or ignored the question.

The coach began every practice which used the dialogue by stating: "For this session you will be allowed to ask any question pertaining to precision that you would like to ask. In fact, I encourage you to ask questions. Also, if you would like to make comments or have input into what we are practising, you

may contribute ideas as we go along." All the practices were conducted in the same manner as the monologue except for the responses to the questions and comments.

Two different measures were taken for each session: a productivity measure and a coaching-style-satisfaction measure. Productivity was operationally defined using the following five categories of behaviour:

(1) Productive practice. Skaters were making a sincere attempt to better their performance on a given task.

(2) Productive listening. Skaters were actively listening to the coach and were, therefore, giving her their full attention (i.e., there were no skaters who were grossly distracted by anything, or who were grossly distracting the others).

(3) Productive speaking. One or more of the skaters were constructively speaking either to the coach, or to another skater about the task at hand.

(4) Transitioning. Skaters were purposefully and quickly getting into the task starting positions, and they were hustling back to the coach at the end of the tasks for further instruction.

(5) Unproductive behaviour. Skaters were behaving in such a way that they detracted from: a) successful delivery of instructions, b) successful interactions between the skaters and the coach, or c) successful completion of tasks.

The productivity measure was taken by an independent

observer who was trained by the coach to reliably judge the behaviours. The observer was also familiar to the skaters and did not provide a distraction for them. At the start of each practice she familiarized herself with the categories as listed above and, then, sat at rinkside to make and record her observations. Every 10 seconds the observer looked up from her stopwatch, noticed what was happening during the practice and made a tick in a column corresponding to the appropriate category on a recording sheet. Satisfaction was assessed by administering The Coaching Style Satisfaction Questionnaire to each skater after each session. The questionnaire consisted of eight items each of which the skater responded to on a scale from one to five. To avoid a response set for items 1, 3, 5, and 7 she indicated her satisfaction to dissatisfaction and for items 2, 4, and 6 she indicated her dissatisfaction to satisfaction. The first three items concerned satisfaction with aspects of productivity, i.e., the work the team did, the pace of the sessions, and how directive the coach was. The next three pertained to satisfaction with social fulfilment, i.e., how fulfilled their social needs were, how satisfied they were with their input, and did the coach have in mind their needs. The seventh item asked in general how satisfied they were with the style of coaching, that is, would they recommend it to another precision skater? The eighth and final item asked whether they preferred the current style of coaching for their future

precision practices to which they responded on a five-point scale from (1) "Yes, very much so" to (5) "No, not at all."

Results

Productivity

A total of 3120 productivity counts were recorded for each skating team--Junior and Masters. Similarly, a total of 3120 productivity counts were recorded for each condition--monologue and dialogue. The division of these frequencies into the productive categories is presented in Table 1. All the chi-square tests of differences between the monologue and dialogue were significant. The frequencies in the productive categories which favoured the dialogue were: productive practice (1), x^2 (1, N = 1) = 31.34, $p < .001$ and productive speaking (3) x^2 (1, N = 1) = 210.70, $p < .001$. Productive listening (2) occurred more frequently in the monologue than the dialogue, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 6.71, $p < .01$, and so did transitioning (4), x^2 (1, N = 1) = 11.05, $p < .001$ and unproductive behaviour (5), x^2 (1,N = 1) = 25.90, $p < .001$. The hypothesis that a dialogue will be more productive and less unproductive receives support from three categories, including for coaching purposes, the most important one of increased skating (productive practice). However, more transitioning and listening occurred in the monologue conditions.

Insert Table 1 about here

When the differences between the Junior and Masters teams were examined (see Table 1), the only significance found was that for unproductive behaviour, x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 1) = 28.51, $\underline{p}$ < .001. Table 2 shows that the Junior team was more unproductive than the Masters team in both the monologue and dialogue conditions. These differences were significant: monologue, x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 1) = 7.67, $\underline{p}$ < .01; and dialogue, x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 1) = 9.63, $\underline{p}$ < .01.

The productivity measures recorded for each team in each condition totalled 1560. The frequencies and percents for each team in each condition and in each productive category are presented in Table 2. Considering each team, chi-square comparisons were made for the frequencies in each category between the monologue and dialogue.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows that both the Junior and Masters teams spent a higher proportion of their total practice time productively practising (skating) in the dialogue condition than they did in the monologue condition. The differences were significant: Junior, x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 1) = 9.11, $\underline{p}$ < .01; Masters, x^2 (1, $\underline{N}$ = 1) = 6.68, $\underline{p}$ = .01.

Although Table 2 also shows that both teams spent more time productively listening in the monologue conditions than they did in the dialogue conditions, only the Junior team's difference was

significant, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 3.91, p < .05.

Table 2 indicates that both teams did more productive speaking in the dialogue conditions than in the other, but only the Masters team's difference was significant, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 10.00, p = .002.

Also shown is that both teams' frequencies of transitions were more in the monologue than dialogue conditions, but, again, only the Masters team's difference was significant, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 7.94, p = .005.

Finally, the table shows that both teams had more unproductive behaviour in the monologue than in the dialogue condition. Both the differences were significant: Junior, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 14.08, p < .001, and Masters, x^2 (1, N = 1) = 16.40, p < .001.

Satisfaction

All questionnaire answers (as assessed using the 5-point continuum) were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance for repeated measures (a design of one factor, two levels between and one factor, two levels, within). Individual comparisons for significance of the differences between conditions for each question were made using analysis of variance.

Considering the total satisfaction scores, there was a highly significant overall satisfaction effect in favour of the dialogue coaching condition, M(D) = 3.07, over the monologue

coaching condition, $\underline{M}$(M) = 2.03, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 39.11, $\underline{p}$ <.0001. Examining the means for each condition within each team reveals that for both the Junior team, $\underline{M}$(D) = 2.87, and, $\underline{M}$(M) = 1.87) and the Masters team $\underline{M}$(D) = 3.27 and $\underline{M}$(M) = 2.20) there were significant differences in satisfaction between the two coaching styles: Junior, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 13.13, $\underline{p}$ = .003 and Masters, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 34.46, $\underline{p}$ = .0001.

There was a significant overall team effect in that the Junior team was generally more satisfied ($\underline{M}$ = 2.73) with both coaching styles than the Masters team ($\underline{M}$ = 2.37), $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 4.24, $\underline{p}$ < .05). The interaction between coaching styles and the level of the team was not significant.

Although both the Junior team and the Masters team generally preferred the dialogue, not all the differences between the conditions for each question were significant. The ones which were are as follows:

Junior: questions 4, 5, 7, and 8, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 7.42, $\underline{p}$ = .011, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 17.76, $\underline{p}$ < .001, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 15.63, $\underline{p}$ < .001, and $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 26.36, $\underline{p}$ < .01, respectively.

Masters: questions 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 4.46, $\underline{p}$ = .044, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 5.90, $\underline{p}$ = .022, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 11.35, $\underline{p}$ = .002, $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 20.73, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and $\underline{F}$(1, 28) = 42.59, $\underline{p}$ < .001, respectively.

It appears that much of the variance in the overall satisfaction measure is accounted for by questions 1, 4, 5, 7,

and 8. These questions, with the exception of question 1 which was the only one that was marginally significant, and only for the Masters group, concerned either satisfaction with social-personal factors or general satisfaction. The questions which lacked significant differences concerned satisfaction with more task-oriented matters.

Discussion and Conclusions

The data support the contention derived from past experimental work and from various theories that monologues and dialogues used in coaching can differentially affect the productivity and the satisfaction of precision-skating teams. Generally, the more democratic use of a dialogue in coaching encouraged significantly higher productivity and greater satisfaction or morale than did the more autocratic, monologue style for both the Junior and Masters teams.

Also, there was a significant difference between teams in unproductivity in that the Junior team displayed significantly more skylarking than the Masters team, but there were no significant differences between the teams on any other productivity measure. Regarding morale, the Junior team was significantly more satisfied with both coaching styles than was the Masters team--perhaps, illustrating the tendency for a positive relationship between age and cynicism.

The theories which suggest an interaction with leadership style and individual differences or situations received no

support from the present results. However, perhaps, the lack of interaction resulted from not having marked individual differences in maturity or ability or even in leadership style. Nevertheless, the specific findings are deserving of attention. The productivity that is of most concern to coaches is that the teams practice what the coaches teach, and it was just this productivity that was the most dramatically influenced by the dialogue over the monologue. The next most dramatic difference was the reduction of unproductive behaviour in the dialogue conditions--and the less the goofing off, the happier the coach. The increased practising in the dialogue conditions might have left less time for productive speaking, but this did not occur. In fact, there was an increase in productive speaking for both teams, although the increase was significant only for the Masters team. On reflection it seems probable that a dialogue which encourages questions and comments would produce more productive speaking, but it is vital for coaching purposes that this not interfere with practising--which it did not. If anything, it appears that the increase in productive practice and in productive speaking took away from mainly transitioning and unproductive behaviour, both of which occurred significantly more frequently in both the Junior and Masters monologue conditions than in the dialogue conditions. It follows that unproductive behaviour would decline with an increase in productive practice. To a lesser extent more practice and speaking resulted in less

productive listening. It makes intuitive sense that the team members would listen less when encouraged to participate in a dialogue.

Although the dialogue had a significant effect on productive listening for the Junior team and not a significant effect for the Masters team, the differences between the two teams in both conditions were not significant. Similarly, although the dialogue produced significantly more productive speaking than the dialogue, and the monologue yielded significantly more transitioning than the dialogue for the Masters team but not the Junior team, the differences between the teams were not significant. Therefore, there is no evidence for any interaction between the style of leadership and the age level of the team.

Also, a lack of interaction ensued in unproductive behaviour. The monologue lead to more unproductive behaviour for both teams than the dialogue. There were significant differences between the teams in each condition, but these only demonstrated that, not surprisingly, the younger Junior team gave more unproductive behaviour in general than the Masters team rather than an interaction having occurred with coaching styles.

The absence of significant evidence for interaction among style of leadership and level of team does not support the suggestions of Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1982), Danielson (1976) or House (1971). But, of course, it could be argued that, perhaps, the differences in the styles and/or the levels were not

sufficient to yield a significant interaction.

Satisfaction was generally greater--or, it might be said, morale was higher--when the teams were coached with a dialogue than with a monologue. This is certainly consistent with the zeitgeist of this century as well as with the many studies which have shown that people who participate are happier than those who do not or those who participate less.

In the dialogue conditions satisfaction may have been generally greater, but it was not uniformly so for all the areas of satisfaction tapped by the questionnaire. The particular satisfaction differences were with satisfaction of social-personal needs, whereas the differences were slight when task-oriented matters were compared. This is not surprising because encouraging questions and comments in a dialogue is showing a concern for an individual's ideas and desires.

A question is raised regarding leadership and discourse style. Because the results of the study are consistent with the theories and findings of past studies regarding autocratic and democratic leadership and because the only difference in coaching was that of discourse style--dialogue versus monologue, then is the main defining characteristic of an autocratic leader the use of a monologue and that of a democratic leader the use of a dialogue?

Any conclusions must be tempered by the limitations of the study. Order effects could have transpired for both

productivity--more experience in the second session--and satisfaction--greater familiarity with the coach and other skaters in the second session. Also, the findings are not readily extendable to males or to individual sports. These affairs are for future research.

Extenuated as above, then, a democratic style of coaching which engages members of a skating team in a dialogue is likely to be better for both morale and productivity than an autocratic style which directs the team by employing a monologue.

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Table 1 Team total productivity frequencies and percents

	Category				
Condition	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Junior Totals					
Frequency	1463	1180	123	237	118
Percent	46.9	37.8	3.9	7.6	3.8
Masters Totals					
Frequency	1428	1261	120	262	49
Percent	45.8	40.4	3.8	8.4	1.6
Total Monologue					
Frequency	1295	1311	83	302	130
Percent	41.4	42.0	2.6	9.7	4.2
Total Dialogue					
Frequency	1596	1130	160	197	37
Percent	51.2	36.2	5.1	6.3	1.2

Note. Categories: (1) Productive Practice, (2) Productive Listening, (3) Productive Speaking, (4) Transitioning, (5) Unproductive Behaviour.

Table 2 Junior and Masters Teams Productivity Frequencies and percents

	Category				
Condition	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Junior Monologue					
Frequency	650	638	47	139	87
Percent	41.7	40.8	3.0	8.9	5.6
Junior Dialogue					
Frequency	813	542	76	98	31
Percent	52.1	34.7	4.9	6.3	2.0
Masters Monologue					
Frequency	645	673	36	163	43
Percent	41.3	43.1	2.3	10.4	2.8
Masters Dialogue					
Frequency	783	588	84	99	6
Percent	50.2	37.7	5.4	6.3	0.4

Note. Categories: (1) Productive Practice, (2) Productive Listening, (3)Productive Speaking, (4) Transitioning, (5) Unproductive Behaviour.